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SUBJECT: DPKO ASG ANNABI MAKES TRANSITION PROGRESS WITH AU

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: The UN is cautiously optimistic that planning for transition of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a UN mission is on better footing following consultations with AU Peace and Security Commissioner Amb. Said Djinnit and his team, UN ASG for Peacekeeping Operations Hedi Annabi told a group of partner Ambassadors April 13. Annabi has received a visa for Sudan and is scheduled to meet Sudanese President Bashir April 15. Annabi asked for partner pressure to keep the AU on track with transition and to persuade the Sudanese government to allow transition planning to proceed. The UN agreed to provide enhanced technical assistance to the AU to bolster AMIS during the transition period, but Annabi cautioned that injecting NATO assistance too early could render transition more difficult politically. The AU and UN are to release a joint communique citing agreement to expedite transition planning and strengthen AMIS in the interim. End summary.

¶2. (U) Ambassadors or their representatives from the U.S., UK, EC Delegation, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Canada, Italy, and the Netherlands were present at the briefing.

HEADWAY MADE IN ADDIS

¶3. (SBU) Annabi told the assembled partners that there was some doubt in New York on the level of cooperation to be expected from the AU for transition planning despite the March 10 AU Peace and Security Council (PSC)'s clear decision for joint planning. While body language of some AU officials (i.e. AU Commission Chairperson Konare) still leaves room for doubt, Annabi said, discussions with Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit and his team clarified matters.

¶4. (SBU) Annabi said that Djinnit agreed on the need to expedite transition planning and engage in more regular consultations between Addis and New York, as well as in Darfur. Annabi expressed satisfaction with commitments he received from Djinnit that the AU will join the UN on the transition planning/assessment mission. He stated that his trip to Addis was a useful investment and noted that the AU and UN would release a joint communique on the visit which would express agreement on the need to expedite planning as well as to enhance AMIS in the interim.

¶5. (SBU) Asked if the AU team still appears to be considering a joint operation or a continued AMIS operation with UN logistical assistance to be serious options as Konare seemed to have indicated to SYG Annan in New York, Annabi said that the only issue Djinnit raised was how to organize and conduct

planning while also strengthening AMIS (Note: Konare was not in town for Annabi's trip. End note). According to Annabi, Konare's options were framed to avoid a scenario of UN-Sudan confrontation should there be no peace agreement and the situation on the ground in Darfur continues to deteriorate. Still, Annabi said, SYG Annan conveyed the point that these scenarios are impractical.

HOPE FOR A BASHIR NOD FOR TRANSITION PLANNING

¶6. (SBU) Annabi said that he and his team received Sudanese visas earlier that day and were promised a meeting with President Bashir for April 15. Annabi plans to deliver a message from UNSYG Annan to Bashir and to meet with other Sudanese officials to try to bridge the divide on transition planning. The Sudanese need to be reassured that the UN does not want to impose itself on Sudan and is not a Trojan Horse for a Western invasion, Annabi noted. Annabi commented that Sudan has experience with the UN and needs to stop acting like the UN is a strange animal. We want a peacekeeping operation and need Sudan's cooperation, he said.

¶7. (SBU) Annabi indicated that he seeks an affirmative nod from Bashir before he proceeds with organizing the transition planning mission. He declared himself not fully optimistic that he would get the acquiescence he sought, and asked partners to apply pressure on Sudan. Annabi said that, once Bashir gives a green light, it will take a few days to deploy a mission. The UN team would spend two weeks on the ground and another week to compile a report for the UNSC.

ADDIS ABAB 00001003 002 OF 003

KEEP THE PRESSURE ON

¶8. (SBU) Asked by Ambassador what partners can do to facilitate the conduct of the planning mission, Annabi called for individual and collective pressure on the AU to reinforce the positive spirit in which the AU team now appears to display with respect to joint planning. Annabi also requested that partners work to reassure the GNU regarding UN intentions. Annabi said that UNSYG Annan intends to contact the Arab League Secretary General, President Obasanjo, President Mbeki and other key African leaders to assist with the GNU. He noted that he met with Ethiopian Minister of State Tekeda while in Addis to enlist PM Meles' leverage on Bashir.

PLEA TO STRENGTHEN AMIS TO FACILITATE TRANSITION

¶9. (SBU) Annabi emphasized that, if a future UN PKO in Darfur is to be based on AMIS, partners must do everything possible to strengthen AMIS in the interim. Rehatting alone has been proven in Sierra Leone not to work, Annabi cautioned. He said it would be delusional to believe that the UN could successfully re-hat AMIS as-is. Annabi added that bolstering AMIS will also make transition more politically acceptable for Africa, as a stronger AMIS stands less chance of giving the impression of a UN rescue. He said that precise requirements to bring AMIS up to par can only be determined during the planning mission.

¶10. (SBU) Annabi assessed that the AU team in Addis has the will to enhance AMIS and prepare transition, but has incomplete know-how. While the UN has no mandate or funding to provide equipment to AMIS, it can strengthen its assistance cell in Addis and offer technical assistance in areas such as Joint Operations Center (JOC) set-up, logistics and communications (Note: These are many of the same areas

where a NATO contribution is being considered. Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit will meet with partners April 17 to discuss partner assistance to the JOC. End note).

¶11. (SBU) Annabi asked that partners ensure potential UN troop contributing countries live up to their commitments and also to encourage Rwanda or Nigeria to provide an extra battalion to AMIS now that Senegal and South Africa have fallen through. Annabi noted that the mandate of a UN mission will have direct bearing on UN ability to attract military and civilian contributions. He said that the UN plans a mission significantly larger than AMIS, but intends to compensate for lack of even higher numbers by ensuring mobility and rapid reaction capability. Annabi said that, while the UN wants to retain the African character of the mission, there will undoubtedly be call for other regions to contribute. He noted a particular need for advanced specialized capability only possessed by Western forces.

¶12. (SBU) Annabi was cautious on the potential contribution of NATO to enhance AMIS. He said that UNSYG Annan supports a role for NATO, but expressed concern on the timing of NATO involvement. Annabi said that, while there are things NATO and the EU can do to enhance AMIS, talking about NATO presence at this stage complicates securing Sudanese cooperation on transition planning.

TEXT OF AU-UN COMMUNIQUE

¶13. (U) On 12 and 13 April, 2006, teams from the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat met in Addis Ababa to discuss the implementation of the AU Peace and Security Council communique of 10 March 2006, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1663 (2006) of 24 March, pertaining to the envisaged transition to a United Nations operation in Darfur.

¶14. (U) The two teams agreed to work together to expedite planning for the envisaged transition to a United Nations operation in Darfur and, in the meantime, to strengthen the AU Mission in Sudan. They also agreed to establish mechanisms for coordination and joint planning, in consultation with the Government of Sudan and other parties concerned.

¶15. (U) The AU delegation was led by Commissioner for Peace and Security Said Djinnit, and included the Head of AMIS,

ADDIS ABAB 00001003 003 OF 003

Baba Gana Kingibe, as well as senior staff from the Peace and Security Department and the Darfur Integrated Task Force. The United Nations team was led by Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hedi Annabi, and included the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sudan, Taye Zerihoun, as well as staff from DPKO and UNMIS.
HUDDLESTON